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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 09 BEIRUT 000407

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NEA/PI FOR SULLIVAN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [KMPI](#) [KPAO](#) [LE](#)

SUBJECT: LEBANON: NOMINATIONS FOR MEPI STUDENT LEADERS PROGRAM

¶1. (U) On March 7 and 10, a four-member Embassy panel conducted interviews with short-listed applicants for this summer's MEPI Student Leaders Program. Ten principal candidates and four alternates were selected based on their qualifications for the program and interview performance. The ten principal nominees are in rank order: Nermine Chatila, Dima Matta, Maria Hamalian, Mohamad El Amin, Yara Zogheib, Roldy Arrouk, Amal Dib, Raghid Charara, Brenda Iara Younes, and Sandra Ayoubi. The four alternates are in rank order: Adel Nehme, Lana Salman, Ashraf Shouaib, and Elias Karam.

¶2. (U) Following is complete biographical data and post justifications for the ten principal nominees:

Nermine Shatila

- a. Shatila;
- b. Nermine;
- c. Abdul Sattar;
- d. 10/28/1988;
- e. Beirut;
- f. Lebanon;
- g. Lebanon;
- h. Lebanon;
- i. Female;
- j. Maamari Basha bldg, 2nd floor, Bahrain Street, Caracass, Beirut, Lebanon;
- k. Mobile: 961-3-550575;
- l. nas22@aub.edu.lb;
- m. None;
- n. American University of Beirut (AUB);
- o. BA Economics Q minors in Human Rights, Anthropology and Transitional Justice (September 2006-present);
- p. Research Assistant at the Career and Placement Service at the AUB Student Affairs Office since February 2007. Guide at the Visitors' Bureau at the AUB Office of Information and Public Relations since September 2006;
- q. Citizenship award for extensive involvement in community services and extra-curricular activities;

- r. Member of the AUB Awareness Club;
- s. Reading, writing, drawing, painting, jewelry making, soccer and morning jogging;
- t. Assistant Editor at AUBQs Outlook Student magazine since September 2006. Secretary of the UNESCO Club at AUB since August 2006. Co-founder and leader of local group Aie Serve since March 2007 (see section x);
- u. None;
- v. Excellent oral and written English as evidenced by application and interview;
- w. Master Program in Public Policy;
- x. Nermine plans to pursue a career in public policy-making in Lebanon with an emphasis on culture and education. This choice of career comes from her passionate desire to change, develop and improve her country rather than immigrate to a more sheltered and peaceful nation. Since high school, she has intensively engaged in clubs and activities that work to build a better community. In pursuit of this goal, she founded a student group named Aie Serve in February 2007 which she currently leads and plans to develop into a more effective and influential institution. As a team, Aie Serve members have been able to adopt a less-privileged school in Beirut and introduce changes to its curriculum by establishing its first-ever co-curricular block for high school students. This block centers around a debate club which aims to increase awareness and activism amongst its students, in addition to teaching leadership, critical thinking, communication, and research skills. Besides the co-curricular block, weekend activities aimed at environmental

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improvement were introduced in collaboration with environmental organizations. The MEPI summer leadership program will indubitably enable Nermine to develop her newly established and infant group by providing her with proper leadership, management, and team-building skills. At the same time, fellow participants will greatly benefit from Nermine's creative ideas and extensive experience in community activities;

Dima Matta

- a. Matta;
- b. Dima;
- c. Mikhael;
- d. 09/29/1988;
- e. Beirut;
- f. Lebanon;
- g. Lebanon;
- h. Lebanon;
- i. Female;
- j. Abadjian bldg, Bloc B, 6th floor, Mar Mkhayel Street, Mar Mkhayel El Nahr, Beirut, Lebanon;
- k. Home: 961-1-443485 ;
- l. dima.matta@haigazian.edu.lb;
- m. None;
- n. Haigazian University;
- o. English Literature Major and Teaching Diploma (September

2006-present);

p. Since October 2006, Dima has served as the Assistant Director at the Haigazian University ActorsQ Club. Specifically, she leads the cast in play rehearsals and manages schedules and performance publicity drives. While still in high school, Dima also led a Beirut summer camp in 2005 where she supervised different children activities, including swimming, dancing, art and crafts;

q. None;

r. None;

s. Acting, writing, dancing, reading, public speaking;

t. In October 2006, Dima joined a philanthropic club QDesert StreamsQ which provides basic supplies to poor families, organizes charity events and helps renovate schools and clinics. Since October 2007, she has been a member of Haigazian UniversityQs Education Club which organizes book fairs and promotes reading awareness. From October 2006 to July 2007, Dima was a member of a kick boxing team. She participated in tournaments and competitions and obtained an orange belt.

u. None;

v. Excellent oral and written English as evidenced by application and interview;

w. English teacher;

x. DimaQs career goals are very focused. She wants to become an English teacher because she rightly believes that her country is in dire need of fresh and qualified teachers. The MEPI summer leadership program will help her achieve her goals by intriducing her to native English speakers and the American culture. More importantly, she convinced the Embassy panel that this program will give her the leadership skills needed to become a better teacher and a strong role model for her future students. She wants to inspire her future students to chose the right path, expand their horizons and help them master the learning and English language skills they will need to succeed in life;

Maria Hamalian

a. Hamalian;

b. Maria;

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c. Garabet;

d. 01/01/1987;

e. Bourj Hammoud;

f. Lebanon;

g. Lebanon;

h. Lebanon;

i. Female;

j. Sfeir bldg, 2nd floor, Jbeil main street, Blat;

k. Mobile: 961-70-843425 ;

l. whitebutterfly25@hotmail.com;

m. None;

n. Lebanese University;

o. English language and literature (November 2006-present);

p. Hair dresser since March 2006;

q. Started an internship in a translation office in January 08;

r. None;

s. Writing (poetry, plays, novels), reading, dancing, oil painting, traveling, learning languages;

t. Worked as a volunteer at an orphanage in the summers of 2001 and 2002;

u. None;

v. Good oral and written English as evidenced by application and interview;

w. Translator;

x. Maria comes from a lower middle class background. She has been working as a hairdresser for the past two years to pay her own way through university. She is self-confident, poised, ambitious and hard working. She chose translation as a future career because she sees it as a cultural mission aimed at bringing people from different backgrounds closer together. The MEPI summer leadership program will give her a unique opportunity and practical experience in dealing with people from different cultures and backgrounds. At the same time, we believe that Maria's participation in this program will have a very positive impact on the group because she has a lot to give and share with others. Her volunteering experience in humanitarian activities has shaped her personality, developed her team work spirit and unfolded her leadership potential. On several occasions, she was assigned to lead groups in the QBirds Nest orphanage where she successfully supervised a number of activities which brought smiles on young children's faces;

Mohamad El Amin

a. El Amin;

b. Mohamad;

c. Naaman;

d. 02/28/1988;

e. Tyre;

f. Lebanon;

g. Lebanon;

h. Lebanon;

i. Male;

j. El Nour bldg, Block A, 7th floor, Tyre, Abbassiye crossing;

k. Home: 961-7-345459; Mobile: 961-70-843425;

l. mohamad.amin@lau.edu.lb;

m. None;

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n. Lebanese American University (LAU);

o. Economics (September 2005-present);

p. Since October 2007, Mohamad works as a Web journalist/Developer at the Lebanese Red Cross. From May 2006 to October 2007 he held the positions of team leader and fundraiser with the Greenpeace Mediterranean organization;

q. University Academic Recognition: Distinguished List Spring 2006, Honor List Fall 2006, Distinguished List Fall 2007;

r. None;

s. Chess, cultural and environmental tourism, economics, philosophy, music, writing, poetry;

t. Volunteer in Greenpeace oil spill team and the Oceans campaign marine reserves team. Volunteer in summer camps organized by the Ministry of Social Affairs in 2002, 2003 and 2004. Member of the UNESCO club at the LAU since February 2006;

u. None;

v. Good oral and written English as evidenced by application and interview;

w. Pursuing a career in a non-governmental organization;

x. Mohamad is from Tyre, South of Lebanon. He comes from a lower middle class background and has impressively combined paid work in NGOs, work study programs at LAU and a full-time course load. Even though a job in the private sector may have eased his financial situation a bit, he opted to work with NGOs because he strongly believes that work is not only a way to earn money but more importantly to contribute to the well-being of society. His commitment is impressive. Mohamad is determined to pursue a career in the NGO field and we believe this program will provide him with the necessary skills to achieve his long-term goal of serving the community in the best possible way. At the same time, Mohamad's extensive volunteering experience with Greenpeace will help raise awareness amongst fellow participants on the impact of such action both on the personal and community levels.

Yara Zogheib

a. Zogheib;

b. Yara;

c. Youssef;

d. 11/21/1989;

e. Zabbougha;

f. Lebanon;

g. Lebanon;

h. Lebanon;

i. Female;

j. Bldg 29, 3rd floor, Ain Aar, main street, Metn, Lebanon;

k. Home: 961-4-911709; Mobile: 961-3-164502;

l. yara.zgheib@gmail.com;

m. None;

n. Notre Dame University (NDU);

o. International Affairs and Diplomacy;

p. Provided private tutoring in English and Math for 11-12 year old students;

q. University Academic Recognition: Dean's list;

r. None;

s. Ballet and latin dancing, piano playing, acting (she was part of her high school drama club), reading, writing (she was the editor of her high school magazine);

t. Yara joined the Scouts Movement in Lebanon in 1997 and has

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continued her involvement in the organization. She is currently the assistant troop leader of the QCaravellesQ branch (for girls aged 15 to 17). She is also a member in the University Christian Outreach (UCO) which aims at bringing college students together to educate them more about their faith. In November 2006, she took part in an inter-scholar and inter-confessional effort to reenact the Lebanese peopleQs declaration of unity and independence. Specifically, she worked with 24 other high school students from diverse religious backgrounds to write a unified declaration of LebanonQs unity, sovereignty and independence. The document was presented to, and acclaimed by the main religious leaders in Lebanon. In May 2006, she was selected to attend the Model United Nations-Global Classrooms in New York where she won, along with another Lebanese student, the QBest Delegation awardQ;

u. Traveled to New York from May 20-27, 2006 to attend the Model United Nations-Global Classrooms;

v. Excellent written and oral English skills as evidenced by application and interview;

w. International Affairs and Diplomacy;

x. Yara is strongly attached to her country and has chosen to pursue a political career in Lebanon because she genuinely believes that this is how she can best contribute to its development. She is aware however that it is still very difficult for a woman to be taken seriously in politics in Lebanon, but she is convinced that her generation will be the one to change that. The MEPI summer leadership program will provide her with the necessary tools to gain more self-confidence and hence assert herself in her future career. At the same time, we strongly believe that YaraQs participation will add a lot to the program. She has a vibrant and joyful personality.

She smiles often, laughs a lot and came across as someone who stands up for what she believes in. She has so far engaged in many diverse interesting activities despite her young age. Scouting taught her discipline, teamwork, determination and integrity. Model United Nations taught her leadership, diplomacy, negotiation skills and respect for others. Ballet taught her to put her heart in everything she does. If admitted to this program, she will enrich it with heartfelt enthusiasm and willingness to give both alone and in a group a unique Lebanese perspective to the debate, a good-humored attitude and a disposition to serve.

Roldy Arrouk

a. Arrouk;

b. Roldy;

c. Miled;

d. 10/20/1988;

e. Chiah;

f. Lebanon;

g. Lebanon;

h. Lebanon;

i. Male;

j. Nouhad al Boustany Bldg., Basement floor, Antonios Street, Adonis, Zouk Mosbeh, Lebanon;

k. Home: 961-9-222926; Mobile: 961-3-481153;

l. roldy-al9@hotmail.com;

m. None;

- n. Notre Dame University (NDU);
- o. Marketing;
- p. Waiter and Cook's assistant at La Maison restaurant (August 2002-October 2007); waiter at Orange restaurant (October 2005-May 2006);
- q. Notre Dame University, Marketing degree expected in June 2008; listed on the university's Dean's List of Academic Recognition;
- r. Member of SEF Amicale (Service de l'Enfant au Foyer), member of the Pastoral Club and member of the Marketing and Advertising Club at NDU;
- s. Photography, camping, drawing, and reading;

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- t. Volunteer at Caritas since 1999, certified member of QCentre d'entrainement aux methodes d'education active du Liban (C.E.M.E.A.L.) since 2005, an organization that organizes training camps for youth; volunteer at Anta Akhi, 1998-2004, an organization that provides a decent life for individuals with physical and/or mental disabilities;
- u. None;
- v. Good oral and written English as evidenced by application and interview;
- w. Marketing Manager;
- x. Roldy comes from a poor neighborhood in Beirut's southern suburbs. He lost his father at a very young age and started working since the age of fourteen (as a waiter and a cook assistant) to sustain his family's needs. He is hard working and ambitious and this program would provide him with his first opportunity to travel outside of Lebanon. His dream is to become a successful marketing manager and to serve consumers by delivering what they need and want. This leadership program will teach him how to better use power, influence, persuasion, conceptual and communication skills to achieve his career goal. At the same time, Roldy has a lot to share about his extensive volunteering experience mainly with humanitarian organization CARITAS since 1999 and Anta Akhi which empowers individuals with physical and mental disabilities. He said that these organizations helped his family during difficult times in the past and it is a testament to his character that he has learned the importance of giving back at such a young age.

Amal Dib

- a. Dib;
- b. Amal;
- c. Antoun;
- d. 01/09/1988;
- e. Bterram;
- f. Lebanon;
- g. Lebanon;
- h. Lebanon;
- i. Female;
- j. University of Balamand, P.O. Box 100-606, El Koura, Lebanon;
- k. Home: 961-6-416080; Mobile: 961-3-882313;
- l. amal.dib@hotmail.com;

- m. None;
- n. University of Balamand;
- o. Major in Mass Communication and minor in Political Science and International Affairs;
- p. Assistant at the Office of Students' Affairs at the University of Balamand since February 2006; free lance journalist at a monthly newspaper called Hamzet Wassel since May 2007;
- q. University of Balamand, Mass Communication degree and minor degree in Political Science and International Affairs; placed on the Dean's List in Fall and Spring semesters of 2005, 2006, and 2007; winner of Fares el-Hajj scholarships for two consecutive years 2006 and 2007;
- r. Co-founder of the Balamand Students Support Group (BSSG), member of the Miss University of Balamand committee, member of the Astro Club, Photography Club, Cine Club, and Oriental Choir at the University of Balamand, member of the Youth Coalition for Electoral Reform and the University Initiative for Electoral Reform, president of the Human Rights Club at the University of Balamand;
- s. Reading and writing political studies and articles and an active person in favor of humanitarian issues;
- t. Assistant Chief in the Scout National Orthodox Scout group since 1992; volunteer at Offre Joie NGO that promotes inter-confessional dialogue and tolerance, organizes youth camps and helps in reconstructing schools and prisons; member of the European Project

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for Interreligious Learning (EPIL), a roaming course that aims at building dialogue among women from different religions in Europe and the Middle East;

- u. None;
- v. Excellent oral and written English as evidenced by application and interview;
- w. Journalism;
- x. Amal Dib is a brilliant student as evidenced by the scholarships, awards and honors she received. She has a lively and energetic personality and came across as a confident, open-minded and tolerant person. She is preparing to become a journalist and is always looking to broaden her outlook. The MEPI Summer leadership program will help sharpen her communication and leadership skills which are essential for her future professional goals. At the same time, Amal has a lot to share about her experience with the Scouts movement, her volunteering activities with NGO Offre-Joie, her participation in the European Project for Interreligious Learning, her human rights activities at her university club and her action in support of electoral reform in Lebanon.

Raghid Charara

- a. Charara;
- b. Raghid;
- c. Nabil;
- d. 01/01/1989;
- e. Beirut;
- f. Lebanon;
- g. Lebanon;
- h. Lebanon;
- i. Male;



- j. American University of Beirut, P.O. Box 11-0236/4326, Riad el-Solh, Beirut, 1107 2020, Lebanon;
- k. Home: 961-1-857037; Mobile: 961-3-070614;
- l. rns27@aub.edu.lb;
- m. None;
- n. American University of Beirut (AUB);
- o. Biology Pre-Med and minor in General Business Administration (September 2006-present);
- p. Assistant Teacher at the International College Summer Camp (July 2004-September 2004; July 2005-September 2005), private tutoring (July 2005-October 2005);
- q. Award of Achievement in Mathematics (CAAP test, part of IORA research center) AUB; Distinguished Scholars' Award from the International College, 2004, 2005, 2006; Acting Award, International College 2006; Community Service Award, International College 2006; Information Technology Award, International College 2006;
- r. Member of Drama Club at the International College, 2005 and 2006 and the Arabic Club at the International College 2006;
- s. Acting;
- t. Assisted children suffering from cancer at the Saint Judes Cancer Center; provided educational assistance to Palestinian children at the Bourj el-Barajneh Palestinian camp, voluntary work at the al-Nasma NGO that packed food, water, and basic needs for the displaced during the July 2006 war; Mouvement Social, provided community service activity at the International College where major social problems were discussed and feasible solutions were sought;
- u. None;
- v. Excellent oral and written English as evidenced by application and interview;
- w. Physician;
- x. Raghid is a brilliant student as evidenced by his grades and the

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special honors and awards he received. His application essays thoughtful, thought-provoking and extremely well-prepared. This leadership training will significantly contribute to his aspirations of becoming a successful physician as he hopes to improve his communication, decision-making, and coordination skills for later use in emergency and operating rooms. Furthermore, the community service training that the program offers complements Raghid's personal interests. He has volunteered with various NGOs in Lebanon working on projects targeting Palestinian refugee camps, and others with children suffering from cancer and underprivileged families. His exposure to community service projects in the U.S. will allow him to acquire methods to enhance his involvement and participation in voluntary social services in Lebanon. Raghid also dreams of starting his own organization that delivers vaccinations and healthcare to poor children. This training will help him develop a vision for his organization and provide him with the necessary skills to bring it to life, lead it and inspire others to join him on this project.

Brenda Iara Younes

- a. Younes;
- b. Brenda Iara;
- c. Nader;
- d. 04/07/1988;

- e. Cordoba;
- f. Argentina;
- g. Lebanon;
- h. She holds an Argentinean passport, but is also a Lebanese citizen and can obtain a Lebanese passport if needed;
- i. Female;
- j. Nagib Younes Bldg., 2nd floor, Blat Jbeil, Lebanon;
- k. Home: 961-9-795722; Mobile: 961-70-140791;
- l. yara\_younes@yahoo.com;
- m. Allergic to caffeine;
- n. Notre Dame University (NDU);
- o. Journalism;
- p. Activity leader at Arne Osland, local refugee house in Forde, Norway where she entertained refugees and gave English lessons to refugee women;
- q. Award in the Lebanese American University's Science and Arts fair: first place in essay writing; Saïid Akel award for her performance in a play; placed on the Dean's List for academic recognition at NDU since her first semester;
- r. Member of Avaaz, a web movement involved in various economic/political and environmental petitions and action plans; a participant in the American Islamic Congress, she attended one of their workshops in Amman Jordan last spring;
- s. Dancing, skiing, reading, and writing;
- t. Has organized a Book Club with friends that meet every three weeks to discuss novels; Cine Club, a weekly movie session followed by a discussion; member of the Board of Advisors of her previous school, Universal School of Lebanon;
- u. None;
- v. Excellent oral and written English as evidenced by application and interview;
- w. Writer;
- x. Brenda aspires to make change through what she does best, writing. She wants to become a successful journalist and looks forward to an idealistic new generation of thinkers, philosophers, political analysts and opinion leaders who can educate others. This leadership training will help her assert herself both as a woman and a journalist. In addition to her passion for writing, Brenda is very active. At school, she took on many responsibilities: the school magazine, the yearbook committee, the organization of major events, plays, musicals, projects and contests. When she was later

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admitted to the United World Colleges in Norway, she acted in the same way: she joined the Red Cross group and became a first aid responder. She was also elected to represent the student body in the student council and worked on the environmental committee. She also conducted community service activities, including weekly visits to a refugee center. If admitted to this program, she will bring a lot of enthusiasm and know-how to the group.

Sandra Ayoubi

- a. Ayoubi;
- b. Sandra;

- c. Nabil;
- d. 08/12/1986;
- e. Tripoli;
- f. Lebanon;
- g. Lebanon;
- h. Lebanon;
- i. Female;
- j. Massoud Center, 10th floor, Jemayzat Street, Tripoli, Lebanon;
- k. Home: 961-6-428988; Mobile: 961-3-137016;
- l. sandra.ayoubi@hotmail.com;
- m. None;
- n. Lebanese University;
- o. Civil Engineering;
- p. None;
- q. Seven Honorary Awards from her school and a Thank You Award from Inma2 summer camp;
- r. None;
- s. Music;
- t. Supervisor at the Inma2 summer camp (July-September 2003), debater at the Chaen and Injaz workshops (2006-2007), and scout at the College National Orthodoxe Scouts (June 1997-September 1998);
- u. None;
- v. Good oral and written English as evidenced by application and interview;
- w. Civil Engineer
- x. Sandra Ayoubi comes from Tripoli, North of Lebanon. She is ambitious and hard working. She is currently studying civil engineering at the Lebanese University, a public university, and would like to pursue an MBA after she graduates. She has a sustained high level of academic achievement as indicated by the numerous honorary awards she received at school. She is timid but has a lot of potential. Engaged in various cultural and community service activities, she has already demonstrated strong leadership when she led a youth summer camp in 2003. This program is a key opportunity for her personal, social and professional development.

13. (U) Post action officer: Jacqueline Ward; telephone number: 961-4-542600 ext.4432; fax number: 961-4-544318; email address: wardjl2@state.gov

14. (U) Biographical data and justification for alternate candidates will be provided as needed.

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